

“Jonathan”

Jonathan gives me freedom I never had before in my later life. I’ve suffered from polio since contracting it at age two in Indonesia. I was born into a Dutch family and lived there while my dad was working for the Dutch East Indies Trading Company. Polio broke out in 1950, and I was one of two children who got it. The other child died. After the doctor did a spinal tap and diagnosed me with polio, I was sent home for my mother to care for me, since there were no facilities in Indonesian hospitals to treat this disease or provide any aftercare. So, I was sent to a Dutch masseuse who worked on me with the wool packs, massages and electrical stimulation. Slowly I regained use of my left leg, but my right leg always remained mostly paralyzed. Somehow, I managed to limp badly along in my younger years, with the doctors believing that the more I used my right leg, the more function I would get back.

I had my first surgery at age five, and over the years I got worse with post polio syndrome. Using a right long leg brace and two Canadian crutches proved more difficult as time went by. After many more surgeries to correct my gait and straighten out my back (with a full C2-S1 fusion and 95 surgeries to date), I finally succumbed to a wheelchair. It brought me much freedom, but not for going places. I needed a special friend to give me the freedom I needed to be myself and allow me to do what I love most – travel. I needed to get out of my house and go places. I searched for my friend, and he was there waiting for me. He gave me the freedom I so desperately needed, and he is faithfully there for me. He is reliable and never complains. What a friend. I love Jonathan, my wheelchair lift van.

- Corina Zalace, Niceville, Florida

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